

*News Release from Congressman*

# ROB SIMMONS

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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## SIMMONS RECEIVES AWARD FOR SUPPORT OF VETERANS HOMES

*Congressman Recognized For His Support Of  
State Veterans Homes and Veterans Issues*

**WASHINGTON** – Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of State Veterans Homes (NASVH) for recognition of his work for veterans' services.

"I can't think of a more deserving recipient of our Distinguished Service Award than Congressman Rob Simmons," said NASVH President Doris Neibart. "His national leadership on veterans issues, and especially on veterans health and long term care matters, has significantly improved the lives of countless veterans in Connecticut and all across the country. Our State Homes and the veterans we serve are indeed fortunate to have such a courageous and effective friend and advocate in Rob Simmons," she said.

"It is an honor for us to recognize all of the hard work that Congressman Rob Simmons has done and continues to do on behalf of all veterans, and especially those aging and disabled veterans who need and deserve our support," said Robert Shaw, NASVH's Legislative Chair who presented the award to Simmons. "From the battlefields of Vietnam to the hallways of Congress, Rob Simmons has demonstrated the courage and passion our Nation needs from its leaders. We are presenting to him our Distinguished Service Award for a lifetime of service to our Nation, and particularly for his work to improve the lives of his fellow military veterans," he said.

Simmons delivered the following acceptance remarks today:

*Let me start by thanking the National Association of State Veterans Homes for presenting me with this very prestigious award. As a very proud Army veteran myself, I am deeply moved and humbled to be honored for doing what I believe is the one of the first priorities of our government, caring for our elderly and disabled veterans.*

*I want to thank everyone here today for this wonderful award, especially President Doris Neibart, Legislative Chair Bob Shaw, and all the members of the Executive Committee. Let me also thank all of you who work in the State Homes' system for providing such a vital service to those deserving men and women who have worn the uniform of our Nation. As someone who himself proudly wore that uniform, starting as a buck private in 1965*

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*and retiring as a Colonel in 2003, I personally appreciate all that you have done and continue to do for my brothers- and sisters-in-arms. You have dedicated yourselves to provide the best care possible for our elderly and disabled veterans, and we in Congress must equally dedicate ourselves to ensure that you continue to receive sufficient support and resources from the Department of Veterans Affairs to maintain that quality of care.*

*I know firsthand the level and quality of services that State Homes provide because I am privileged to have one of your Homes in my State of Connecticut, at Rocky Hill, near Newington. The Rocky Hill Home was first established by the State of Connecticut for wounded and homeless Union soldiers in 1864, so it represents one of the very earliest commitments by States to care for veterans. Many other Homes have followed suit over the last 140 plus years, as we can see from the number of State Home administrators here tonight.*

*In 2003 and 2004, while I served as Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee, I joined with State legislators, the Governor and then-VA Secretary Anthony Principi, to secure funding for a large construction project to upgrade and modernize a 230-bed skilled nursing care facility in Rocky Hill. Former Secretary Principi is here tonight, and I want to thank you, Tony, for supporting that project and helping us to get it done. I also want to recognize Frank Salvias of the VA Extended Care office, and John Bradley, my Subcommittee Staff Director at the time, for their work in getting this project to the point of a grant award. I also want to acknowledge Linda Schwartz, the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs, for her work in getting this project elevated in the State legislature and within the Executive Branch of our State government. I also want to commend the Governor of the State of Connecticut, Jodie Rell, for her support of this project.*

*In fact, I feel so strongly about the importance of State Homes and the National Association of State Veterans Homes that I recently introduced a Congressional resolution, H. CON. RES. 347, along with my friend and colleague, Congressman Richard Neal of Massachusetts. With enactment of this resolution, Congress will formally recognize the work you do as an association and highlight the importance of the State Veterans Homes in caring for elderly and disabled veterans. We are working to have this passed before the end of the year, and I would ask all of you to lend a hand by asking your own Members of Congress to cosponsor the resolution.*

*Let me close by saying that as a Nation we must do everything possible to restore all of our military service personnel who are injured in the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's the least we can do. But we also must make sure we don't forget veterans of the older conflicts –World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other military actions. They, too, deserve the thanks of a grateful Nation. The work that you and all of your colleagues and staffs do helps us fulfill the promise laid out long ago by President Lincoln, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan." All of you do this every day, and I want you to know how grateful I and so many others are for the work you do. This award will serve as a constant reminder to me of your service in caring for America's heroes and, again, I want thank all of you for this high honor.*

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